

Xander Bogaerts' jump from Double A to MLB 'pretty special'

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After making his debut in the middle of a pennant race and becoming a member of the starting lineup in the ALCS, [Xander Bogaerts](#) Monday will finally get to experience what Opening Day feels like.

It's sort of a backward progression, but Bogaerts vows to make the most of it and enjoy his first opener.

"Coming over on the bus today," said Bogaerts, "I was thinking that last year, I opened the year at Double A. And this year, I'm in the big leagues. That's pretty special right there -- from Double A to the big leagues in one year. Opening Day...that's pretty good. I can't wait. It's nice to be here from the start.

"I'm just happy to be on the team and be part of it with the guys again. Hopefully, it will be a successful season for the team again. That's all I'm really focused on right now."

Bogaerts said his teammates haven't offered any specific advice about dealing with Opening Day.

"It will definitely be a game like all the other ones," he said. "But there's a little more excitement to the first one every year, so I'm definitely excited about (Monday)."

After a slow start with the bat in spring training, Bogaerts finished with an uptick in the final 10 days, spraying line drives around as he got his timing down with his swing.

"I had some stuff to work on," said Bogaerts. "Timing is always a problem that I have. But I think I ended up (spring training) pretty good."

Last season, Bogaerts mostly played third base, supplanting Will Middlebrooks at the position. But with Stephen Drew not re-signed, he'll start the year back at his familiar position at shortstop.

"My confidence is pretty high, especially at short," he said. "I'm ready for whatever ball is hit to me. I'm a lot more (prepared). I took huge steps forward (this spring). This year, I worked a lot (with third base coach and infield instructor Brian Butterfield)."

-- Sean McAdam, *CSNNE.com*